

9/11

THE
SAINTS IEWELL,
shewving hovv to apply
the promise.

In
A Sermon preached by
THOMAS SHEPHEARD.

*For the promise is unto you, and to your
children, and to all that are afar off,
even to as many as the Lord our
God shall call, Act. 2. 29.*



Printed in the yeere.
1642.

To the Reader,

REader, the body may as well subsist without the soule, as the soule can without a promise, and as the body is not wearied with bread (being the staffe of life) though it hath it every day for nourishment, so likewise the fainting hungry soule can never be cloyed with feeding upon the promises: for which cause I have also adventured this little Sermon, not doubting, but it may reape it's due fruit, from those whose hearts are rightly affected, which God granting, I shall account my labour abundantly requited. Farewell.

T. S.

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shevving hovv to apply
the promise.

Having these promises,
dearely beloved, let us
cleanse our selves from
all filthines of the flesh
and spirit, perfecting ho-
lines in the feare of God.
2 Cor 7, 1.

 He Apostle Paul in the
former chapter exhor-
teth the Corinthians to
beware of unequall yo-
king themselves with
unbeleevers, and hee
gives a double argu-
ment for it, one from
the unequalnes of it, the other from the pro-
mises,

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mises , as in my text, *Having these promises.*

In these words are three parts.

1 First a loving appellation in these words,
Having these promises, dearly beloved.

2 A gracious exhortation, *let us cleanse our
selves from all filthinesse of flesh and spirit,
perfecting holinesse in the feare of God.*

3 An argument for instigation, or motive
that hee useth to presse his exhortation,
which is from the nature of the promise.

That which is in the last part of the di-
vision, is first in order of the words, and
therefore we will looke upon the words,
as they ly in order : and so from the last
part and first words I shall handle this
doctrine.

Doct.

That God made many promises unto
his people.

I am come to you this day not to set out
unto you the excellency of wit or learning,
or the creature : but the excellency of a
naked promise, according to that, 2 Pet 1, 4.
*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and
and precious promises.*

Now all the promises of God unto his
people, are such as concerne the body, or
the body and the soule : those that concerne
the body are with this limitation, that is,
so farre as concernes Gods glory, and the
good

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good of our soules : but for the body and soule, consider that place. *For the Lord is a sunne and Shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good will he withhold from them that live uprightly.* Psal. 84. 11.

I Come to the reasons why God hath thus made many promises unto his people, and they are three.

The first reason is this, that his people might have a fit object for their faith to lay hold upon, for if you looke upon all the creatures in the world, you shall finde in all of them jointly, or any of them apart, a fit object for faith to worke upon, or be satisfied in : it is with faith as with a poore woman that hath a child, and hath nothing in the world to give it, shee takes the child at her back and goeth from doore to doore, and what shee getteth shee giveth to the child, so faith takes the soule, and carrieth it to promise after promise, and what ever she findes there she gives it to the soule.

The second reason, why God hath made many promises unto his people is, that they may have a ground of comfort : for as it is the object of their faith, so it is the ground of their comfort : for all other things of this world cannot profite or comfort the

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beleeving

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beleeving soule; as suppose we should go to friends for comfort, it may be they want comfort for themselves, and so are unfit to comfort us, or it may be they will not comfort us, or it may be they are a great way off, and so cannot doe it: or perhaps though able and sometimes willing, yet they are mutable in their comforts, so as though at one time they are willing and doe comfort us, yet another time they faile us: but Christ, to whom the soule is led by the promise, not onely hath comfort and is able to comfort us, but he is willing also to give comfort to us, who *Psal. 145. 18.* knoweth our wants, *and is neere to all that call upon him in trueth*, and also he is immutable in his comforts. And were the creature a sufficient ground of comfort to Gods people, then to want the creature were a sufficient ground of misery to them: but a man may want health, wealth, liberty, and the like, and yet through and in Christ, his soule may have satisfying comfort: but if he want Christ, though he hath a fulnesse of the creature, hee is most miserable and without all satisfying comfort; the promise onely is able to afford comfort to the soule in health, in sicknes, in life, and in death.

The

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The third reason, why God hath made many promises [unto] his people is, that they may become mutuall comforters one of another, by having somewhat by experience from a promise, wherewith they may be enabled to comfort others, so that you may see the promise is not given, to comfort our selves with onely, but also one another.

Now for use. Is it so that God hath, *vse.*
made many promises unto his people, let us try our selves, whether we have any right to the promises, or no, I will name but one note that you may the better remember it, and it is a true one, for you shall find it in Scripture. *But the Scripture hath concluded all under sinne, that the promise by faith in Iesus Christ might be given to them that beleeve.* *Gal. 3. 22.* So that you may see it is to them, and to them onely that beleeve: he that can exercise faith in the promise, hath right to the promise, *For ye walke by faith, and not by sight.* *2 Cor. 5. 7.*

If Christians be in afflictions and see that it doeth them good, then it is easie to beleeve that promise which God hath made, *All things shall worke together for the good of them that love God.* *Rom. 8. 28.* But to beleeve this promise, when wee cannot see any good

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come of affliction, that is to beleeve by faith and not by sight: but when we can see no good come by affliction, but finde our selves more dead and dull, and also God to frowne upon us, and yet wee trust in God, and beleeve the promise, and stay our soules upon Gods word; this is to live by faith, as we are commanded, *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voyce of his servant, that walketh in darkenes and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* Faith maketh things absent to be present, and maketh the promise good to us, though things seeme to thwart the promise never so much. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seene,* with the eye of sence. As Abraham beleeved against hope, that he should haue a child, according as God had promised: so must we trust God upon a naked promise, that if health should be gone, or wealth, liberty, strength, friends, yea life it selfe almost gone, and God seemes to be gone, and hell to be threatned, yet still to trust in God, and beleeve, this is to live by faith, and comfort is in the promise for all such, but I speake now to Gods people.

Iai. 50. 10.

Heb. 11. 1.

Rom. 4. 18.

2. Vse.

The second use of this doctrine is, That seeing

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seeing God hath made many promises unto his people, it is a ground of comfort unto them all, that though they goe up and downe sad, as if they were the worst people in the world, yet have they the onely cause to reioyce, and they onely in all the world. for heere is comfort against all their sins, God hath promised to doe them away. *I am he that blotteth out thy sinnes, for mine owne names sake,* comfort thy selfe, Christ is thine. *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine,* if therefore there be enough in Christs merits, hold up thy head and take comfort to thy selfe.

Oh but saith the poore soule, I finde sin prevaile, and how can I then be comforted? Object.

I answer, looke into that place of Scripture. *I will subdue your iniquities, and cast your sinnes into the midst of the sea,* and in the 20 verse you may see the oath of God, for the trueth and mercy of the promise was gone forth before. Answ. Mic. 7. 18. 19. 20.

But saith the soule, the Devill will be busie with mee where ever I goe, and how can I be chearefull? Object.

I answer, God hath said it, *I will tread downe Sathan under your feet shortly.* Comfort thy selfe in this though Sathan may trouble thee for a time, yet thou shalt have Answ. Rom. 16. 20.

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have him under thy feet shortly.

Object.

Oh but againe saith the soule, I shall meet with abundance of opposition in the world, and I am not able to make my party good, and how can I then reioyce?

Answ.

Pro. 11. 21.

I answered, flee thou to the promise against that also, as where it is said, *Though hand joyne in hand, &c.* Though men joyne themselves together, and strike hands, even with the devill against Gods children, yet shall they not overcome them.

Object.

But alas saith a poore soule, I am in present want of outward comfort, and how should I be comfortable in such a condition.

Answ.

I answered, It may be God dealeth with thee in this, as a mother with her children, who takes away the victuals from the children for a while, and puts it into the cubbord, but afterward she giveth it them againe. So sometimes God taketh away these outward things, and locketh them up for a while in the cubbord, which is in the promise, and when he seeth it best for us, he giveth it to us againe: and thus hee

Iob. 1, 15. &c

did with Iob, He tooke away all his outward comforts, and left him so poore, as it is a proverb at this day (As poore as Iob :) but after a while, God did not onely restore unto him his former comforts, but

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gave him double : And this was written for thy comfort, and the strength of thy patience : comfort thy selfe therefore, happiness is above the creature.

But I shall meet with many mocks and reproaches in the world. Object.

Ans^w. Let us comfort our selves against this with Gods promises : let us doe as the covetous man in the Poet, who being mocked as he went in the streets, went home and looked into his closet, and there seeing his bags of gold, rejoyced in his wealth, and scorned all their reproaches, so when we are mocked and scorned of men of the world, let us looke into the Bible, and we shall finde bags of promises, true treasure, and therein let us rejoyce. Ans^w.

But it may be the poore soule will say, alas I cannot goe to God by prayer to fetch comfort, or if I doe pray, it is with so much coldnes and deadnes, as I cannot beleieve I shall obtaine any thing. Object.

I answered though it be so, yet beleieve and thou shalt have thy desire, though it may be thou canst but chatter, and though others hearing thee, regard it not, yet God will say let me heare thee, and as a father loves to heare his child prattle, though others regard it not, so God loveth to heare,

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heare his children pray.

Obiect.

But oh, I am afraid of death, and that taketh away all my ioy and comfort.

Ansv.

I answere, thou mayest comfort thy selfe against that, yea and make death it selfe a ground of comfort and ioy to thy selfe. If a child be at bord from his fathers house, though he be at play with his fellowes, yet if he see horse and man come to fetch him, he is glad, and leaves his play and companions to goe home to his father willingly: so here wee are at bord in the world, and we are at play, as it were among the creatures, but when death comes, which is as horse & man we should be willing to goe to our fathers house, which is best of all.

Obiect.

But I am afraid if suffering times should come, I should never be able to stand out.

Ansv.

If God call thee to sufferings, he will give thee grace sutable to thy condition, he
1. Cor. 13. 10. *will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to beare it.*

Obiect.

But alas, I am afraid I shall fall away from God, and that continuall feare thereof, doth take away all my comfort.

Ansv.

Answere, None can plucke thee out of Christs hands, neither sin nor devill; shee
were

were a cruell mother that would cast her child into the fire, Christ must doe so, if thou shouldest go to hell; yea more, if that should be so, hee should rend a member from himselfe, for he is thy head, and thou art one of his members: therefore for thy comfort know this cannot be; the Lord saith, *I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I wil not turne away from them to do them good.* But you may say perhaps I shall turn from him, see therefore what followeth in the same verse, *I will put my feare in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.*

This is good newes, it may bee the Object. poore creature will say, if I had right to the promise, but alas I cannot beleeve, and take a naked promise:

Ans. Dost thou desire to beleeve, and to have Christ, and canst thou say thus, If it were possible heaven and Christ could be separated, I would rather have Christ without heaven, then heaven without Christ, then comfort thy selfe, for God hath promised, *I will give to him that thirsteth of the water of life freely.* Ans.

But this is a hard matter, & I cannot say, I truly desire Christ on such terms as I should Object.

But is it a grieft to thy heart that thou canst not deny thy selfe, and happines, rather Ans.
then

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then be separated from Christ, and to close with Christ, even upon any termes: it is thy burthen, because thou canst not desire to beleve as thou shouldest. Then comfort thy selfe, *God will accept the will for the the deed* in this case.

1 Cor. 8. 12.

Obiect,

But the soule objecteth and saith, alas I am so farre from being grieved as I ought, that I rather find a hard heart that will not grieve and mourne for sin, I cannot finde breakings of heart for it.

Ans.

For thy comfort, I will come one step lower to thee, hast thou any will to it, Marke this place, if any place in the whole Scripture be for thee, here it is in the last words of this verse. *And who soever will, let him take of the water of life freely.*

Rev 22. 17.

But it may be the wicked will say, I will have Christ: but stay, not every one that saith so shall have Christ, but art thou willing to part with thy finnes, and it may be to part with health, wealth, liberty, friends, yea and your owne life also, what say you? Are you willing upon these termes?

Obiect.

But the poore soule saith againe, I feare I shall never doe this, but art thou willing that Christ should make thee willing, and pitch thee upon a promise, and should hold

hold thee there? If thou canst finde these things. then comfort thy selfe, for thou hast right unto Gods promises.

The third use is, Seeing God hath made many promises unto his people, this is ³ Vie. terrour to the wicked. Here are many in this congregation, to whom I have not spoken one word in the last use of comfort: now God sends other newes to you, therefore put it not off from you, if I prove not what I say by Scripture, beleeve me not what I have said for the comfort of Gods people, I must say the contrary unto you.

First, as Gods children have their names written in Gods booke, and you have your names written also, but it is in the blacke booke of Gods wrath,

Secondly, as Gods children have a marke set on their foreheads, so there is a marke set on you, but it is a woefull one, for though I iudge you not, yet I am perswaded the devill hath set his blacke marke, with a brand from hell one some of you: yea a man may gather from your very faces almost, what some of you are, but the day of judgement will fully discover you all. But in the meane time, know this whosoever you are that are under your naturall condition, you are under Gods curse

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Deu. 29. 19. 20 curse, as it is, If any shall heare the words of
 this curse, and blesse himselfe in his heart, say-
 ing, I shall have peace though I walke in the
 imagination of my heart, &c Then the Lord
 will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord
 and his jealousie shall smoake against that
 man, and all the curses of this booke shall be
 upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name
 from under heaven, &c. Also, I will heape up
 mischief upon you, and I will send mine ar-
 rows upon you. Oh what a heavy thing is
 this, I pray you consider it sadly; not to
 have right to Gods promises, is the condi-
 tion of a man that is cursed, and miserable
 in his life, at his death, and after his death,
 You rich gentlemen and gentlewomen, give
 me leave to speake to you, I pray you con-
 sider thus much, if you have not right to
 Gods promises, the curse of God is stamped
 upon every crosse and peny, and upon every
 thing you have, See but this place, I have
Mal. 2. 2. 3. *cursed your blessings, saith the Lord*, as if he
 should have said, though I have given you
 plenty of corne, and money, and other
 things, yet they are to you but as curses,
 and is not this a very sad thing: give mee
 leave to deale plainly, it is as if a man had
 but two pence in all the world, and he
 should goe and buy a halter with it, to hang
 himselfe

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himselfe, yea further, all that thou hast in this conditon, is but as if thou shouldest twist a cord together to hang thy soule in hell. And to you of the poorer sort, that have not a right to the promise, you are in a miserable condition, for you are both miserable here and hereafter also. *Israel hath not returned to him that smote them, neither doe they seeke unto the Lord, therefore the Lord will cut off from them both head and taile, branch and rush in one day.* Againe whatsoever you doe in your calling is accursed unto you, yea your praying, reading, hearing, fasting and mourning, all is sin, for *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord.* Isai. 9. 13. 14

But if it be so, may these wicked men say, that our best duties are sin, why should we performe any duties, either praying, hearing or the like? Object

In answere to this, know for certaine whiles thou art in this condition, thou art in a bad condition, for every thing you doe is sin. *Vnto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled, and unbeleeving, nothing is pure, but even their mindes and consciences are defiled.* So that to you, to performe duty it is sin, or not to performe duty is sin: but yet omit not duty, for though in performing duty thou sinnest: yet not to performe duty, is a double sin. Answ.

B

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To performe duty, whiles thou art in thy naturall condition is sin for the manner, because though thou mayest doe the duty for substance, as pray, heare, conferre, or the like, yet because thou doest want a principle of grace, nothing is done aright, and so wanteth acceptance: but to neglect duty is a sinne, in regard of matter and manner; also, for as it is sinfulness it selfe not to doe the duty, so it is sin to have the heart not rightly disposed for the manner of performance: it is with you, as it was with the leapers, they said among themselves thus, *Why sit wee here till we die? If wee say we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city and we shall die there, and if we sit still here, we die also: Now therefore let us come and fall unto the host of the Syrians, if they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us we shall but die.* So say thou with thy selfe, If I doe duty I sin, and if I doe not performe duty, I commit a double sin, but I will goe to duty, if God will save me, I shall live, if not, I can but perish: and for thy comfort consider, it may be God will cast an eye of pity upon thee, thou art in the way, that is the meanes God hath appointed to bring you home to Christ: but yet untill thy condition be changed, all thou doest is sinne, for, *The very thought of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

2 King. 7. 3. 4

Prov. 15. 26.

But

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But oh strange, Though firebrands out of hell be spitted in your faces, yet you are not affected: But it may be some of you thinke to doe it, when you are sicke, or upon your death bed, but it may be too late then, when God openeth and awakeneth your conscience, and if you be not awakened here, you shall be sure to be awakened in hell. I remember I heard of a yong prodigall, when he was dying, looked on the fire and said, as that fire burneth there, so shall my soule burne in hell. Another said on his death bed, Oh that I might live, though it were but the life of a toad. God is very carefull to send his Angels for the godly: but for the wicked, the devils stand ready at his bed side to fetch him into hell as soone as his breath goeth out of his body, and then they will cry out. Oh the time of mercy that I have had, but now it is past, the gate of mercy is shut, never more to be opened.

But it may be yet some will say, thanks be to God I am not in hell yet, and as long as there is life, there is hope.

Oh fearefull, what hope still, read that place and tremble in reading of it, *The Lord of that servant shall come in a day, when hee looketh not for him, and in an houre that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites,*

Ez

there

Obiect.

Answ.

Mat. 24. 50, 51

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there shalbe weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Oh consider this against the day of iudgment, it is a sad day for all such, when mercy and parience and Christ shall pleade against them: yea, *The dust of ministers feet shall rise up against them.* Oh but if so, then what will their condition be, when drops of blood and sweate shall rise up against them: yea more, the husband shall reioice to see the damnation of the wife. *The righteous shall reioyce when he seeth vengeance on the wicked*, because God hath gotten the glory of his enemies.

Luke. 10. 11.

Luke. 22. 44.

Psal. 58. 10.

4 Use.

I

The fourth use is, An exhortation to the godly first, and secondly to the wicked.

In the first place, to the godly that complaine they cannot lay hold on the promise. Go to God to enable you, & that you may so doe.

Iohn. 3. 18.

I.

Eph. 4. 30.

Consider in the first place, that not to beleeve and lay hold on the promise is a sin of unbeleeefe, *And he that beleeueth not is damned.* See the evill of this sin of unbeleeefe in these particulars

First, *Hereby we grieve the holy spirit of God, whereby wee are sealed to the day of redemption*, What a grievous thing is it for thee who desirest to be assured that the promise is thine, that thou by unbeleeefe shouldst grieve that holy spirit, which sealeth up the promise to thy soule, see that place.

Heare

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Hear ye now, oh house of David, is it a small thing for you to weary men, but you must weary my God also. If a man promise to doe another man a courtesie, and after some delay, that man comes to him and saith, Will you do as you promised me? He saith, yes, but saith he will you indeed? and thus he pleadeth with him a whole day, and doth not beleewe him, will not that exceedingly grieve his friend, who promised him so to doe, and fully intended no lesse: even so is it with all those that are Gods people, and will not beleewe what God hath said unto them, but stand and plead with God, two or three yeeres or more: as those that beleewe glorify God, so those that will not come in, rob God of his honour and glory, and grieve him.

It argueth a great deale of pride of heart in them, that they will not beleewe, because they have not what they would, but something they must have of themselves, like women that will not goe to a feast, because they have nothing to carry.

Here is a great deale of unthankfulness, for all that God hath done for them, yea e-
uē for Christ himself. where we love, we are very thankfull, and where we desire to be thankfull, wee will be willing to take a kindnesse.

It argueth a great deale of impatience,
B 3 when

Iai. 3. 17

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when we will not wait in a way of beleev-
ing upon the promises of grace, and cheer-
fully attend Gods leasure.

5 He that will not beleewe, gives God the
1 Iohn. 5. 10. lie, for, *He that beleeveth, &c.* Hee that be-
leeveth not in every ordinance he comes to,
he maketh God a lyar, because every ordi-
nance beareth record of Christ.

6 Not to beleewe, is a denying of Gods
power, for they will not trust God, espe-
cially in a great straight, and by this wee
may see what a many sins, even Gods peo-
ple may commit in this case.

Consider againe in the second place what
a safe thing it is to beleewe, I speak to Gods
people: As Surgeons when they let a man
blood, bid him looke another way, so
when the devill letteth you blood, that is,
holds you pooring on your corruptions;
looke another way, I meane on God, and
then you shalbe safe from the devill, and
the world, and your own corruptions. And
that you may lay hold on the promises of
God, take heed of those lets and impedim-
ents that might hinder you.

I Sin is a let, for it will wrest the promise
Mai. 5. 2. out of our hands, *But your iniquities, &c.*

2 The second impediment is, our doub-
ting and wandering in our prayers, for, *We*
Iam. 1. 6. *must pray lifting up our holy hands, &c.*

3 The third impediment to beleieving is,
flavish

flavish feare, when we feare man more then God, contrary to that counsell, *Feare not* *Iſai. 8. 12.* *their feare, nor be afraid, &c.*

The fourth let is, When we lay downe one thing that might afford us help, and draw our selves to God, and in the meane time, take up another, which can no way help us : as when we lay downe the promise, and take up the threatning.

Fiftly, when we set our mind too much on the creature, or honours, and seeke our owne basenes, or worldly pleasures.

In the next place, take these helps to lay hold on the promise.

Labour to live by faith, in all straits, and conditions, and by faith fetch a supply for al your wants by the promise from Christ.

Secondly, marke the promise well, which is the ground of all comfort, and read them over often.

Do not flutter up & down from one promise to another, but lie a great while on some one, and wring and squeeze it by meditation upon it.

Thirdly, apply the promise aright, do not thinke it belongeth not to you, because you have not that presently which is promised in it, you must know, that God setteth not downe the time, when it shalbe fulfilled.

Fourthly, We are to wait patiently, and humbly under our present condition, vntill God

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God grant our desire, Gods time is the best time.

5
Psal. 103. Blessè God for all his promises, but especially when they are made good to us.

In the next place to those that yet stand out, and are not closed with the promise, I entreat you, come in to God, take his gracious offer, lay hold on the promise : which that you may doe, take heed of those things that wil be lets, and hinder you,

1 Take heed of all sin, for the Lord saith,
your sins have kept back good things from you.

2 Take heed of setting your mind to muck upon the creatures, for they will shut out God the creator. Old men, do you come home to God, yong men do you remember your creator in the dayes of your youth; God this day calleth you, it may be he will never call more, how many hath the Lord struck with death & sicknes, and how soone it may be any of our turnes I know not : sicknes is an unfit time to get Christ, and to make our peace with God, if you stand still you die : If you go on in sin you die, therefore turne from all your sin and come in & lay hold by faith on the promise, that so ye may live, and this that I have spoken unto you may not be in vaine.

FINIS.

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